



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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11 Cases of Pertussis Identified in Helena Area

Eleven cases of pertussis, or whooping cough, have been identified in the past two weeks in the Helena area, the Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department announced Thursday.

The cases have so far been found in school-aged children and adults. The health department is contacting people who have been exposed to the disease in an effort to keep it from spreading.

Pertussis is a serious respiratory illness that can spread through close and prolonged person-to-person contact. People with pertussis can have symptoms ranging from runny nose and intermittent cough to severe uncontrollable coughing that can last for months – this is sometimes called “the 100-day cough.”

Pertussis is common in the United States, and there are frequent outbreaks, but it can cause serious illness and can even be life-threatening, especially in infants.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend using antibiotics to treat those in close, prolonged contact with someone who is sick with pertussis. Antibiotics work best when given early in the course of the disease.

“Another way to help protect our community is to get vaccinated,” said Karen Dobson, public health nurse at the health department. “Adults, especially those who live and work with infants, should be sure they’ve received a tetanus booster with pertussis. Protection from the regular series of childhood shots wanes over time.”

The health department offers pertussis shots during regular walk-in immunization clinics Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1930 Ninth Ave.

For more information, contact your health-care provider or the Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department, 443-2584, or visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/pertussis

*The Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department's mission is to improve and protect
the health of all Lewis & Clark County residents.*